



Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI)

The Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC) has released [new clinical recommendations](#) to help service members who have sustained an mTBI to progressively return to their normal activities following their injury. The new clinical recommendations include: clinical support tools for primary care managers and rehabilitation providers, educational brochures, and provider training slides.



More than 287,000 service members have sustained a TBI between 2000 and 2013¹. The majority of these (83.3 percent), were classified as mTBI, also known as concussion^{1,2}. A concussion occurs when external forces injure the brain and can be caused by blasts, falls, a blow to the head, an object penetrating the skull or may occur when the brain moves back and forth forcefully in the skull.

Symptoms

A concussion is characterized by the following: a confused or disoriented state which lasts less than 24 hours, possible loss of consciousness for up to 30 minutes, memory loss lasting less than 24 hours, and structural brain imaging (MRI or CT scan) yielding normal results¹. Symptoms of concussion may include the following:

Physical

- Headache or ringing in ears
- Problems related to balance
- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Sleep problems
- Problems with vision

Cognitive

- Memory problems
- Difficulty with attention or concentration
- Slow thinking
- Difficulty putting thoughts into words
- Difficulty with problem solving or decision making
- Difficulty with organization
- Confusion

Emotional

- Anxiety
- Mood difficulties
- Depressed mood
- Irritability
- Easily angered/irritated
- Risk taking behavior
- Impulsive behavior

Treatment

Educating patients and family members has demonstrated effective in treating mTBIs and in the reduction and/or duration of symptoms. Possible treatment options for concussions include rest, avoidance of alcohol, and avoidance of further injury. The NMCPHC Wounded, Ill and Injured (WII) Program has established an information and resource library to help health care providers, caregivers, and service members recognize and cope with the symptoms of concussions. For more information please visit the NMCPHC WII [TBI page](#).

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¹ Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center, 2013, DoD Worldwide Numbers for TBI Worldwide totals. Retrieved from: <http://dvbic.dcoe.mil/sites/default/files/uploads/dod-tbi-worldwide-2013-Q1-Q3-as-of-05%20Nov-2013.pdf>

² Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center. (2013). Deployment-Related Conditions of Special Surveillance Interest, U.S. Armed Forces, by Month and Service, January 2003-December 2012 (data as of June 2013), Traumatic brain injury. Retrieved from: <http://www.afhsc.mil/msmrToc>

